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MULTI-LEVEL PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
IN BOTSWANA

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1. INTRODUCTION

"The issue, then, is....what can be rescued from medium term planning that is also feasible' (Killick, 1976:179). Two of the suggestions which...recur in this part of the development literature are a greater preoccupation with public expenditure and the budget and more decentralization of decision making." (Allan & Hinchliffe, 1982:5).

The national and regional development planning practiced in Africa in the 1950s, 60s and 70s generated many disappointments. Plans were often unimplementable, and outdated almost as soon as they appeared; even when implemented, centrally conceived physical and economic blueprints often failed to give the intended results. Two of the resulting lines of concern were how to make planning more operational, for example by linking it to budgeting, and how to mobilize the information and energies at various levels through multi-level planning or "decentralization". Given those concerns, the experiences in Botswana are worth analysing.

Botswana's systems of decentralization and development planning deserve attention on a number of counts. They have coped relatively well with the demands set by an extraordinary rate of economic growth; real GDP grew at an average rate of 12% p.a. in 1965-1985, and at present the boom continues. [1] The system of economic planning has been praised for effectiveness and realism, combining considerable elaboration of procedures with substantial flexibility and manageability (World Bank, 1981; Raphaeli et al, 1984; Harvey & Lewis, 1988); and the sub-system of district development planning has been praised similarly (Reilly, 1981). The system of local government institutions, while weak in several respects, is notable for its persistence and stability over 20 years, in contrast to those in most African countries. Predominantly elected District and Urban Councils, with significant responsibilities and ability to speak out, have continued without being replaced. The implementation of rural projects for physical and social infrastructure, and of drought relief, has been deemed exemplary (e.g. Hay, 1986 & 88).

Box 1 takes the example of the drought relief, which is critical in Botswana. It also shows an approach that combines a coherent centrally-set policy with an emphasis on working through and strengthening existing local organizations. This covers Councils, local committees and the local arms of central ministries. Through experience and with support they become able to work better with central and foreign organizations. While Botswana has had a number of advantages, equally important has been the effectiveness of this programme conception and design (Hay, 1988). Hopefully that is replicable. There is also a darker side to drought, with the reduction of many rural families to dependence, and a trend of desertification that may be linked to the cattle boom which has enriched a minority of others. We will return to that side in section 4.

BOX 1 - DROUGHT RELIEF IN BOTSWANA IN THE 1980S

Droughts are so normal in Botswana that Governments cannot indulge in wishful thinking about whether or not there will be another in the next few years. Pressure on government stems also from its accountability in fixed-date elections. (Vice-President Mmusi was defeated in water-short Gaborone in 1984.) The response has been guided, as in most areas, by belief in careful and open analysis, and by mistrust of organizational gimmicks. By the mid-1980s Botswana had built up an efficient drought relief system, operating through existing Ministries and local authorities. [2]

While the 1970s enjoyed exceptionally good rains, memories of the severe droughts of the mid 1960s and earlier did stimulate some safety measures. But a thorough framework of policy and organization was not in place when in 1979 there was another severe drought. This continued in the north in 1980. Distribution of food was late and uneven. Promptly in early 1981 the government commissioned two hand-picked consultants to review 1979/80 food distribution and relief projects. Their reports were openly debated, including at a special conference. A government response was then quickly formulated. Rather than as suggested switching the troubled food distribution organization to the powerful Finance & Planning Ministry, government upgraded it within the Local Government Ministry. This may have helped retain adequate liaison with local authorities. Finance's weight was still lent to the new system by having it chair the supervisory Inter-Ministerial Drought Committee. Many other detailed changes were discussed and several were adopted.

Serious drought returned as soon as 1982, and has continued for several years. Grain output fell, from covering almost half of national requirements in the 1970s, to negligible levels. Fortunately it was not necessary to spend time discussing basics of policy and organization, or to desperately import them wholesale from an international food donor. By 1984 over half the rural population were regularly receiving food, and up to 70% benefitted, through sharing of rations in households (Holm & Cohen, 1986:21). Distribution was, by international standards, timely, proper and efficient. This was helped by use of the District Administration, Councils, schools and health posts for local allocation. Secondly, by 1984/5 60-70,000 people p.a. were obtaining income from "Labour Based Relief Projects" (LBRPs) - perhaps a quarter of the available rural labour force. Projects are proposed via the village development committees, in consultation with councils' Community Development staff. Council Planning Officers and central government drought relief staff formalize the projects and submit them to higher levels; later they are supervised and supported mainly by Council staff (Egner 1986:87). Thirdly, supply of water for human consumption is handled by the Ministry of Water Affairs and the Councils, and has reached the vast majority. Finally, there are

[Box 1 continued - Drought relief in Botswana]

measures to help people reestablish themselves, managed by the Ministry of Agriculture. District Drought Committees help coordinate the above activities.

All this has meant considerable strain on local-level staff, including teachers and nurses. Other duties could suffer. The technical quality of LBRPs supervised by Council staff has generally been low. But the main goals, those of distribution, are met. On the key criterion of severe child malnutrition, Botswana is reported to have the best record in drought-affected Africa, limiting incidence to just 1% (Holm & Morgan, 1985:469). Malnutrition is in fact below pre-drought levels, as food is more equitably distributed and even the amount of food available per head has increased (Holm & Cohen, 1986). For Egner (1986), Councils have been the unsung heroes, proving themselves capable of taking on unexpectedly large new responsibilities. [3]

The experience here with working through established arms of central and local government (and the private sector) contrasts favourably with that in many countries, which have failed to build up their own systems and belatedly had to call for emergency support directed by international relief organizations and NGOs. The newly arrived international aid-ers are inevitably relatively ignorant and alien. In contrast: "International agencies are so impressed by [Botswana's] own relief organization that they channel all their support through it" (Holm & Cohen, 1986:20). Botswana has made heavy use of foreign expertise, but mainly in the form of specialists on 2-3 year renewable contracts. They can be individually selected and inducted, rather than indiscriminately imported en masse in an emergency. External evaluators are also regularly commissioned.

Prompt response to drought is helped by Botswana's favourable financial situation, and its cautious accumulation of reserves during the drought-free 1970s. Apart from the food, nearly all costs of the programme are now met locally. The volume of food that is donated is still much more per capita than in far poorer Sahel countries - because donors know that it will be efficiently distributed (Holm & Morgan, 1985:478).

This paper reviews experiences in the twenty years since independence in 1966. The main period covered is from 1970/71 (when the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning, the Rural Development Council and the District Development Councils were formed) through to 1985/86 (the end of the fifth National Plan, and beginning of the sixth). Section 4 discusses recent trends, but the paper does not claim to be up-to-the-minute. Rural rather than urban development will be emphasized.

Section 2 presents the background and institutions for planning and decentralization in Botswana. The country's physical extent itself works against an exclusively central administration. Political and economic conditions - including the lack of deep divisions and the easy availability of funds (though not of skilled manpower) - are also favourable to moderate decentralization, within a unitary state. There is extensive delegation by central politicians to administrators and planners - within definite limits, which we will see. In the development bureaucracy there is centralization around the Finance and Planning Ministry. At the least this aids the disciplined management of public finances. The Local Government ministry in turn has considerable power relative to district organizations. Yet the lower-level organizations are in each case ongoing, active, and expanding. While District Councils in particular have grown greatly in the 1980s, a four-part system of local administration is valued and is being kept.

Section 3 looks at the processes of development management. Both central and local government projects are within a system that closely links medium term planning, annual budgeting and project planning and management. It is a system geared to maximizing the rate of development spending in a very unpredictable environment, while incorporating necessary precautions. The system has emphasized intensive informal coordination. Smallness and other factors have facilitated its relatively successful operation.

One can frame the discussion by using Conyers' list (1985) to note the main varieties of rural "regional planning" that are present: (i) the disaggregation of national sectoral plans; i.e. their constitution by specifically located projects and programmes; (ii) district-level coordination of the various programmes; including in the major case of drought relief; (iii) natural resources planning, to prepare and apply rural land-use plans; (iv) settlement planning, for hierarchies of centres and for major-village layouts. It is in the first two areas that the Botswana system is notably developed and can offer suggestions. Community planning and regional economic planning are weaker; and the project-enclave type of "integrated rural development" has not been adopted.

Section 4 looks at limitations and emerging strains in a system that has been strong on obtaining revenues from aid and exports, and deploying them to infrastructure and social services, but weaker on local mobilization and developing rural production and employment. One is interested to ask how far the problems here are inevitable, given the country's situation, and how far they reflect the nature of its decision-making institutions; and whether or not the local-level bodies which have been built up might help in these areas of weakness, despite the centrally perceived requirements for political and financial control. A range of different views on the appropriate balance between centralization and decentralization will be presented.

Section 5 draws together the main themes in the discussion.

Evaluating an institutional setup and discerning themes of more general application are notoriously difficult. How far do elements of strength reflect good fortune and circumstances special to Botswana in a particular phase? Each country is a special case: Botswana is very small in population, arid or semi-arid, yet blessed with diamonds. One needs to provide a reasonably detailed account of both its circumstances and experiences in order to generate themes and suggestions. Readers can then consider how far those might carry over to different circumstances. Referring to programme cases is helpful for readers to get some feel for the setting and for how far the themes fit the country itself, let alone others.

It is necessary too to look not just at institutions in isolation, but at a system of development management as a whole. The ways that organizations like District Councils operate can only be understood with reference to the organizations with which they interact, and to their whole environment, e.g. policies affecting whether they can retain good staff. In Botswana it is particularly important to look at the overall system, as district-level planning is quite integrated into national planning.

If one focused on local government alone one might see the last twenty years as the creation, plus erratic but ongoing development, of an interesting set of local authorities, and thus as a process of decentralization. From a wider viewpoint though one could give at least equal emphasis to the parallel creation of a larger and more powerful central government machinery. Before independence, in the Bechuanaland Protectorate with its policy of extreme "benign neglect", there were fairly independent chiefs and a very decentralized colonial field administration, with powerful District Commissioners (DCs). Around independence in 1966, the power of both chiefs and DCs was reduced; and the transferred power did not go in its entirety to new District Councils and Land Boards. For there emerged an interventionist - and centralized - central government. Central Government staff now outnumber those of local authorities in a ratio of three to one. Perhaps three quarters of central government's permanent staff are in the towns; with possibly three fifths in Gaborone alone. Yet central government's permanent staff in rural areas are still equal in number to those of local authorities; and for "Industrial Class" labourers the centre's rural employees are twice as numerous as Councils'. [4]

While there is now an extensive literature on Botswana's planning systems and experiences, rather little has looked at the national and sub-national levels together and at their interrelations. Most has a national-level perspective, reflecting the dominance of central institutions (e.g. Colclough & McCarthy, 1980). The literature that is on sub-national agencies has concentrated on those in the Ministry of Local Government & Lands, and those they support or supervise, like Councils and Land Boards. There has not been equal attention to deconcentration [5] via the subnational activities of line Ministries (which account for around 80% of public development

expenditure in the districts); nor to how decentralized activities are coordinated within the national planning system. The present paper tries to bridge some of those gaps in the literature.

2. CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION: INSTITUTIONS AND POWERS

"The Botswana Constitution provides for a unitary state; hence decentralisation in the context of Botswana is not of political power but of functions." (Department of Information and Broadcasting, 1986:29.)

2.1. Setting and leadership

Botswana is physically large (582,000 sq.km.) but with a small human population (around 1.2 million by 1988). The great majority of the people are found within 100 km. either side of the Zimbabwe to South Africa railway that runs from north to south along the eastern side of the country. These eastern areas have relatively better rainfall and soils, but are still a very difficult and drought-prone environment for arable agriculture. The areas have long depended heavily on cattle and on labour migration. Most of the west of the country is desert or semi-desert sandveld.

In Zimbabwean terms, it is as if one took the two provinces of Matabeleland, less Bulawayo, and added on a large and mineral-rich portion of the Kalahari (Kgalagadi). Apart from being landlocked, Botswana is fairly comparable to Namibia, in size, aridity, population density and mineral wealth.

Reflecting the country's small population, there are only ten districts, and no Provincial level exists between the national and district levels. [1] This makes it likely that centre-district communication and interaction can on average be easier and more intensive, and that some matters will be more fully centralized, and others more fully decentralized, than in larger countries. Similarly, there are only ten ministries, which may ease coordination. This partly reflects a deliberate concern to keep the government machinery streamlined; there have been no changes in the Ministry line-up since 1973, despite the rapid economic and social changes.

The Botswana set-up is simple in these ways, but relatively complex and differentiated in others. Rural local government has four parts : District Councils, Tribal Administration, District Administration, and Land Boards. Their roles are explained later in section 2. There is an active multi-party system, though the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has held central government power continuously in the independence era. The BDP espouses a mixed economy

without comprehensive State control. There is also a range of non-profit non-government development organizations (e.g. brigades; van Rensburg, 1984).

This institutional pluralism was the choice of a shrewd, as well as fortunate, political leadership; in particular of two men, Seretse Khama and Quett Masire, the founders of the BDP. The BDP coalition followed neither the traditional chiefly structures (unlike e.g. Swaziland), nor the substitute ubiquity of nationalist movements like TANU/CCM, UNIP and ZANU. Its leading members have been from the larger cattle-owners and the new salaried and professional classes. In a rural country with exceptionally unequal distributions of income and assets, it has in general been able to rely on, or ensure, the votes of the masses. Picard (1987) draws an analogy to Kenya's "no-party state", where party structures are mainly active at elections. He suggests that, in the absence of deep party penetration or new traditions, older rural forms thus remain fairly important.

Some authors suggest that independent Botswana has been the closest current approximation to Weber's "administrative State" (Gunderson, 1971; Picard, 1979a). The small group of politicians has been largely content to determine the parameters, structures and boundaries of government action. They leave a high proportion of policy-definition and routine allocation to their bureaucrats, who inherited and retained a high colonial status. It is a "board-of-directors" approach. Picard argues that the BDP was accepted by the British from 1962 as a post-independence government, and acquired this directorial style in relation to expatriate bureaucrats during the 1962-6 transition (1987:Ch.6). There is however now no major social difference between ministers and top civil servants; they have similar backgrounds and economic interests and mix frequently in the small capital city. Some leading Ministers are former civil servants.

The BDP feels no need to become the channel for most activities, or to have its own policy analysis structures to control government. It sees planners as better used in other ways, and the civil service as trustworthy. On major issues too, the role of civil servants to analyse and propose has not been curtailed or inhibited. The right to dispose stays with the politicians. They override the civil servants when they feel fundamental political or economic interests are at stake. [2]

The Accelerated Rural Development Programme of 1973-6 illustrates politicians' minimum requirements, but also their commitment to a welfare capitalism. It is discussed in Box 2.

The stability of the delegated, administrative, style of decision-making seems to reflect a society that has been relatively quiescent and unfractured. Tribal divisions are not very deep; and the scattered Batswana had avoided some of the disruptions of settler colonialism, but stayed poor and peripheral up to the 1970s.

BOX 2 - THE ACCELERATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF 1973-76

Botswana entered independence as one of the poorest countries in the world. Half the recurrent budget and all the capital budget were covered by British grants (though these had only become substantial from the mid-50s). The first two National Development Plans (1968/73 and 1970/5) included rather little that would reach the bulk of the rural population. In the early 1970s rural areas received less than 10% of government investment (Colclough & McCarthy, 1980, Ch.4.)

With the favourable 1969 renegotiation of the terms of the Southern African Customs Union, and opening-up of the Orapa diamond mine, real GDP grew by 22% p.a. from 1968/9 to 1973/4 (Isaksen, 1981:10). The government initiated various discussions on rural development strategy. In particular a 1973 report by Robert Chambers and David Feldman made a series of proposals. The recommended changes in national strategy were not accepted (e.g. to give less priority to urban development, and to reject an approach of growth-maximization plus spin-offs); but some programme suggestions were taken up (Picard, 1979a & 1980). These included the formalization of the district planning system (to be seen in section 3.3 below); the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (2.3 below); and major extensions of physical infrastructure in rural areas. On this last front the Government took immediate and dramatic action.

The 1974 general election was approaching. In the 1969 election some rural seats had been lost by the ruling party, including the seat of the Vice President. In November 1973 the Cabinet announced the Accelerated Rural Development Programme. As in other countries after independence, the overriding purpose was to create visible results by the date of the election. It was given official priority over other programmes. "We were told: Don't worry about the money, we will give it to you as you need it" (a council official). [3] "We were shattered actually at the speed with which they intended to act and then did act" (a central government official); "Services were pushed further out into the rural areas"; "We learnt about villages we had never been" (a contractor). The National Plan's pessimistic rural construction targets were left far behind. [4] However, in several cases the rushed designs were poor, and "costs generally were high"; nor was there much self-help. Small contractors seemed to provide the best value; by encouraging them, "The ARDP.... developed the national capacity to build". The election was duly won - "Since the ARDP we feel there has been an equal share" (a District Commissioner) - but the programme carried on for another 18 months to allow completion of projects that had entered the pipeline. The leadership were impressed by the physical as well as the political results, and have remained committed to rural investment programmes. Equally interesting is that there have been no comparable crash programmes since, other than drought relief. Instead: "We are more or less a permanent ARDP now" (anon.). [5]

Next, independent Botswana has shown extraordinary economic growth. At first this involved beef exports and the effective use of aid. Since 1973 it has involved the export of diamonds, which has become dominant in the 1980s thanks to the new Jwaneng mine. Fortunately diamonds were not found before 1948, which could have brought incorporation into South Africa [7]; nor before there existed a local system ready to effectively handle the revenue. There has been good management as well as good fortune. Zambian experience was one influence. Botswana has been able to implement rapidly, without attempting to do more than is prudent. It had already earned this reputation before major diamonds production came on stream (Jones, 1977). Government now obtains in theory perhaps three-quarters of the diamonds revenue. Large financial reserves are held; and there is a marked absence of prestige projects. New government buildings, the enlarged national stadium, and the new international airport have all remained distinctly modest, so far. Air Botswana does not pursue major lossmaking routes or jumbo aircraft.

At least to date, rapid growth has been more a source of political stability than of instability. Public demands have not pressed desperately hard on the operation or practices of the bureaucracy. The government may even have kept ahead of the effective demand in some areas, by putting heavy emphasis on provision of public goods and on public sector wages and salaries. "The rural poor...are not as yet voicing demands for a greater share of resources and a greater say in decision-making" (Tsiane & Youngman, 1986:ix). Senior officials typically earn substantial incomes from cattle or other businesses, and so have less need to pursue material ambitions through government office. Official corruption and nepotism are reported to be low.

Given this relatively relaxed political environment, the prominence of aid and of expatriates furthered an administrative style of orderly planning. Botswana has been near the top of the recipient league for ability to spend aid to donors' satisfaction; and in the 1970s it received 5x the African average for per capita aid (Isaksen, 1981:14). [9]

High growth, high aid, great initial backwardness, and careful government calculation led to an exceptional continuing expatriate presence. Besides its other pros and cons, this arguably may have affected local consumption aspirations. Expatriates have on the whole been technocrats responding to the opportunities of a challenging and dynamic setting. In general they neither would nor could question the political frame. This allowed a classic division of powers, with the technocrats accorded great freedom within their own domains.

2.2 Central Ministries

The Botswana equivalent of a Planning Ministry or Agency is the Division of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP). Through its deep involvement in budgeting and the issuing of funds it wields greater power than if it just produced documents and advised other Ministries (notably a separate Finance Ministry). Its power also rests on the consistent backing of the President. From 1966 to 1971 the Minister of Development Planning was the Vice President, Quett Masire - the No.2 to Khama ever since the formation of the BDP. In 1971 he became Minister of Finance & Development Planning, in an enlarged Ministry. In 1980 Masire himself became President. His first Vice President was Lenyeletse Seretse, the cousin of Khama; but on Seretse's death Masire returned the Vice Presidency in 1983 to the Finance & Development Planning Minister, now Peter Mmusi.

MFDP dominates public sector resource allocation. The Office of the President is in principle superior, but delegates most of this work. It preempts resources for the Botswana Defence Force, but even the other agencies under its wing (e.g. the Police) have not always escaped pressures from the economists. Its Directorate of Personnel liaises closely with MFDP in manpower allocation. The same applies for the Bank of Botswana in monetary policy. Amongst sectoral Ministries, only Agriculture has sufficient political connections to sometimes operate independently or counterpunch effectively. Commerce & Industry suffers the indignity of MFDP dominating commercial and industrial policy, and even the administration of the Financial Assistance Policy for new enterprises. Councils are very heavily dependent on central government funding. [1]

The preeminence of MFDP is marked in various ways. Its Permanent Secretary ranks above other Permanent Secretaries, and below only the Head of the Civil Service. His deputies, including the Director of Economic Affairs, have the same rank as Permanent Secretaries in other Ministries. The Director of Economic Affairs in particular wields considerable power compared to his counterparts in many countries. The same applies to several of the economists in the large Planning Officer cadre, which he heads. MFDP HQ economists have often retained effective veto power, even on matters of detail.

The Planning Officer cadre also covers the Ministry Planning Units. These units have an important role in communication between sector departments and the central controllers; and, more broadly, in interrelating sector needs and information with national conditions, connections and priorities. They can talk relatively easily with both sides, to understand viewpoints, obtain information and exert influence. In the case of the Local Government Ministry, the Planning Unit's liaison work is especially between Districts and the centre. [2]

Ministries strongly represented at District and sub-District level include Agriculture, Education, Health, Water, and Works & Communications. The degree of deconcentrated power varies: for example a Regional Roads Maintenance Engineer is a fairly senior professional, with significant discretion within a large budget, in contrast to the head of a local Buildings depot. District officials often complain of the unresponsiveness of Ministries, at both national and local levels. There is undoubtedly some truth in these perennial laments, yet is hard to know overall exactly how much weight to attach to them. (One famous example concerned Veterinary Services' construction of nationwide cordon fences without local consultation; but this was admittedly during an epidemic.) [3]

The Department of Town and Regional Planning (DTRP), in the Ministry of Local Government and Lands, seeks to apply a perception of spatial coherence onto these sectoral Ministry activities. It has had less power and centrality than its counterparts in some countries (e.g. Zimbabwe), especially as compared to the Finance and Planning Ministry. Town-and-regionalism came late to the Bechuanaland Protectorate, which was not averse to zoning or legal restrictions but had little scope to practice them:-- (then) only two small towns, simple (and hard to affect) regional and settlement patterns, and not much of a private sector to control. In contrast, the finance men have always been powerful, whether when seeking to minimize budgets or to maximize how far budgets go; and their power increased when they joined with the economists, especially as so much of Botswana's new revenues passed directly to Government rather than to a private sector. [4]

In addition to DTRP, the Ministry of Local Government and Lands (MLGL) contains:-- the Department of Surveys and Lands; the Food Resources Department which handles the bulk of drought relief; the Unified Local Government Service, which manages local authorities' permanent personnel; and the Local Government Audit Department.

The Ministry headquarters includes the usual administrative officers, Finance Unit, Planning Unit, and a prolific Applied Research Unit, but no Statistics Unit. Egner comments that, by having been the only Ministry to publish no annual statistics, let alone disaggregated statistics, MLGL has happened to minimize the scope for informed criticism of its allocations (1987:127). In the 1980s a Technical Services Division has been built up to support local authorities in civil and health engineering and in construction work. The specifically rural section of headquarters comes under a Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS). It includes the Lands Division, which services the inter-ministry Lands Development Committee, and supervises Land Boards; and an Under Secretary for District Plans, who chairs the inter-ministry District Plans Committee. There is also an urban and housing section, under another DPS.

MLGL is concerned to control local authorities as well as support or strengthen them. It will, says the National Plan, "work towards

encouraging greater decentralization of decision-making", rather than simply work towards it or encourage it; whereas it also aims, more forcefully, to "provide effective representation of central government at urban and rural levels and coordinate local authority activities through an effective District Administration machinery" (Botswana, 1985:77).

2.3 District Administration, Tribal Administration, Land Boards

"The District Administration...consists of an administrative section which ensures that harmony prevails in the district". (Department of Information & Broadcasting, 1986:27.)

Each District Administration in Botswana contains not just a District Commissioner (DC) and generalist District Officers. It also has specialists, including the District Officer (Development) and the District Officer (Lands) - DO(D) and DO(L). This system is felt to have been valuable, and has been extended. In 1966 DCs lost some of their authority to the new elected District Councils. It was proposed that they move towards a development role and away from political control. They should coordinate and check on the work of the new or newly active sectoral development ministries. District Development Committees (DDCs) chaired by the DC were established in 1970. So Councils did not acquire preeminence as the District development authority. The new demands on DCs coincided though with rapid localization of the cadre and yet the drawing away of better qualified citizen administrators into the burgeoning central government (Picard, 1979a). A new post was needed, for an executive secretary to the DDC - the DO(D). MFDP insisted that this development coordination role required a good quality graduate, and preferably an economist. This implied the use of expatriates for a period (which proved to be about a dozen years). The presence of expatriates, and the creation in 1971 of its own Planning Unit, helped MLGL to successfully demand that the DO(D)s report to it in the first instance, and not directly to MFDP. In 1975 DO(L)s were added, especially for implementation of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy.

While Councils were not granted primacy, the DC was still weaker than before. The District Development Committee is primarily only advisory, and - perhaps wisely - DCs tended to stick to their formal authority. Those who were more forceful were usually promoted out. In 1979 the Local Government Structure Commission recommended that DCs should concentrate solely on development work and become District Development Directors, at a higher grade than before. Central government accepted the need for higher grading, but insisted on retaining an all-purpose representative at district level. The DC remained with a miscellany of duties; including in drought

relief, general political supervision, and reporting on the Tribal Administration (Picard, 1985).

Botswana's way of handling the transition from - yet harnessing of - traditional political authority has been to leave the chiefs with a formal status and a few remaining powers. Most of these are in principle derived from their government appointment as "tribal administrators". There is a hierarchy of such appointments, each with indicated powers and duties; and some support staff. State supervision of chiefs increased from the 1930s, with for example the imposition of accounting requirements; but even advisory tribal councils did not become mandatory until 1957. These were the forerunners of the District Councils established in 1966, which took some of the Tribal Administration staff, facilities and powers. The chiefs are ex-officio members of District Councils, and in some cases are very prominent (Tordoff, 1988). Apart from their remaining role in tribal ceremonial, they still administer the customary courts (on lines now re-established in Zimbabwe in 1988) and preside over the traditional village fora, the kgotlas.

These fora have probably declined, especially near towns and in the major villages, but are often still influential compared to newer institutions (Inger, 1986; Thothe, 1986). However women, youth and Basarwa, let alone the absentee population, play little or no role in the kgotla; and discussion seems to centre on requests for palliative social infrastructure (Noppen, 1982; Sterkenburg, 1987.)

The Tribal Administration has largely been ignored in development programmes, despite - or perhaps because of - meaning more to most of the rural population than do the Councils (Picard, 1985; Egner, 1986; Tordoff, 1988).

As part of downgrading of the old system, the kgotlas are supposed to elect separate Village Development Committees (VDCs). The VDC is then to promote community development, identify the needy, and liaise with village voluntary groups, the Council and local officials, in particular with the village and district extension teams. VDC boundaries often diverge from those of the kgotlas, and committee members are unpaid. Their record reads similarly to that in many countries. In 1979 half the VDCs were defunct, and only a quarter met regularly. No part of government appeared to pay them great attention, not even the Councils (Reilly, 1981:39). They became more active in the 1980s' drought relief programmes; but are reportedly still generally weak (as are many of the extension teams) and often in conflict with chiefs and councillors (Tsiane & Youngman, eds., 1986). Arguably they might be more effective if linked further to a strengthened Tribal Administration; but, understandably, government has resisted such suggestions.

BOX 3 - LAND BOARDS AND THE TRIBAL GRAZING LAND POLICY

Facing the demanding task of land allocation in a rapidly commercializing rural economy, the supposedly administrative Land Boards possessed little professional capacity (Picard & Morgan, 1985). During 1965-75 large cattle owners responded to lucrative beef export markets by making an effective land grab in new areas (mainly those going west into the Kalahari). Infant Land Boards endorsed the establishment by the big men of boreholes in these grazing lands. Since boreholes had to be 8km. apart, and there are no other reliable water sources, this in effect gave each borehole owner control over a huge area (Colclough & McCarthy, 1980).

In 1975 this process was halted and a new Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) was announced. A nationwide consultation was undertaken, after the policy details had already been set by Cabinet (Picard, 1980; Noppen, 1982). The policy's provisions included zoning of the tribal lands, into new commercial ranches and remaining communal lands. Creation of ranches was supposed to reduce land pressure in the old communal lands, by transferring large owners' cattle out to the new lands. Within the remaining communal lands, measures of improved land management would then be undertaken. This complex and controversial programme was to be administered by the Land Boards, supported by the new DO(L)s. Yet the DO(L) cadre was unavoidably staffed by short-term expatriates, almost without exception. Not until 1981 was a major attempt made to establish training for Land Board members and their staffs (Picard & Morgan, 1985:148), but by 1985 hardly any had been trained (Botswana, 1985:85).

TGLP has involved granting (astonishingly cheap) commercial ranch leases to those who had staked out their boreholes in the early 1970s. It was in part the consolidation of the land grab. Lands were surveyed only after the policy was announced. The survey established that the land grab had covered nearly all available additional areas which had economical potential water supply (See e.g. Sandford 1980, Picard 1980 & 1987.) Earlier overestimation of the land surplus no doubt contributed to the easy endorsement of the policy at the time.

The ranch lease conditions have hardly been enforced, so that many large owners continue to use communal area grazing lands when convenient. Whether it has involved incapacity or bias, the weakness of the Land Boards has thus been to the interest of large cattle owners. Since these include amongst their numbers most politicians and senior Botswana civil servants, Picard & Morgan suggest that it is unlikely to have been an oversight. Reilly (1983) noted that many Councillors too are large cattle owners; but adds that these would have preferred to place land administration directly under the Councils. It should be stated that some of the initially proposed commercial areas were dezoned; and the very slow implementation may sometimes have reflected Land Board disquiet and popular discontent.

After being removed from the chiefs, land allocation was placed under separate Land Boards, not the elected Councils. There are 12 Land Boards and 35 sub-Boards, still reflecting tribal corporate identities. The Boards typically consisted of the chief and another Tribal Administration official, two councillors selected by the Council, and two central appointees, plus non-voting advisory members. MLGL and, in theory, Councils were to set principles, but actual allocation is by the Boards. They have with time become more independent of both chiefs and Councils. Chiefs have recently been assigned instead to a Customary Court of Appeal; this handles persistent customary land disputes, rather than have them pass through Land Boards.

In respect of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy, the Land Boards to date can be seen from one viewpoint as an example of the limits to, and failure of, the planning system in Botswana. (See Box 3.) The gradually growing land-use control capacity in the 1980s has been concentrated upon more politically manageable matters in the remaining communal lands.

2.4 District Councils

"In the light of the [listed] shortcomings, it seems control by Central Government over local authorities is inevitable. Controls have to be reduced as administrative capacity increases" (Dintwa - Under Sec. [Rural], MLGL; 1986:10).

When District Councils in Botswana were created in 1966, the year of independence, it was thought that they would in time take over fully from the District Administration. Within a few years central government had misgivings. Ministries doubted Councils' competence and, especially after the 1969 elections, ruling politicians became concerned at the potential development of centres of opposition and criticism - e.g. around disgruntled chiefs, or even in Councils controlled by the ruling party. Picard suggests that MFDP even proposed to abolish the Councils, as had been done in Kenya (Picard, 1987:171).

The new District Development Committees were placed outside the Councils. In 1973-4 Councils (and Land Boards) lost powers of appointment, placement and promotion over their own permanent salaried staffs. (Councils still control their Industrial Class labourers.) These powers passed to a Unified Local Government Service (ULGS); and a Unified Teaching Service took over the primary school teachers. Unified services reduced the danger of tribalism, and offered more attractive career structures.

The District Councils have however retained important responsibilities. They are the endorsing authority for the District Plans produced by DDCs. More substantively, they have statutory responsibility for the provision and operation of facilities for

primary health care and primary education, in consultation with the relevant Ministries; for non-gazetted roads and village water supplies and sanitation (but with sector Ministries handling much of the initial construction); and for community development and social welfare. Councils contain not just Treasurers and general administrators, but also Works Departments, Planning Officers, and - increasingly in the 1980s - other professionals. Their responsibility for community development might imply that this area is given low weight at present, but it still carries a potential significance (Reilly, 1983:154ff.). And in general, Councils' sustained presence provides a basis for further developments.

In many African countries elected District Councils with significant functions were simply displaced (e.g. in Kenya, Lesotho and Tanzania). Their continuation in Botswana needs to be explained. Picard (1979b, 1987) suggests that Councils lacked any negative associations with the colonial era, thanks to their late appearance. The political culture considers limited expression of opposition to be functional as well as acceptable, and is not prone to drastic reorganizations. Complaints are common because they can be freely made; though compared to some other countries the working relations between Councils and the Ministries appear fairly good (see e.g. Wallis, 1987). Central management of Council staffs, plus Councillors' weak formal education, may also leave them reassuringly dependent and oriented to the centre. (Dintwa notes that: "The relationship between Councillors and Staff is far from ideal.....there are often conflicts due to lack of understanding of their roles"; 1986:8.) Government has also had the power to appoint a proportion of Councillors; and has not faced the test of a mainly opposition set of Councils. Finally, Councils have survived long enough to become appreciated as a useful service-delivery channel.

Councils surprised many people by their implementation capacities in the 1973-6 Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP), especially in building classrooms, health facilities, and housing for teachers and civil servants. ARDP also "increased the capacity and credibility of District Councils and competence and confidence of Council staff", through their experience of managing many projects. [1] "The Council's success in solving the logistical problems amazed me" (anon.). "The normal slippage on which we depend did not occur" (a finance officer). Extra workload was handled not just by extra hours but also by upgrading management systems. "We are aware now that there is local government" (a professional officer in central government). "It broke down a lot of psychological barriers" (anon.).

In his official evaluation, Chambers found himself more impressed on the whole than he had expected to be with this crash programme. But he argued that what was needed next was not another ARDP - "It was a building programme. I do not think it was a development programme" (anon.). Other authors have suggested that top-down building programmes undermined village-level interest in self-help, both then

and since (Inger, 1986). Chambers stressed that infrastructural achievements alone do not guarantee the effective provision of services, especially in remote areas. Recurrent and manpower inputs are also needed. Here he recommended more devolution, and block grants to local authorities; use of poverty rankings in project appraisals; and a special poverty-oriented programme for the NDP IV period, 1976-81. Amongst other things what happened next though was implementation of the inegalitarian Tribal Grazing Lands Policy; plus indeed the top-down provision of much more physical and social infrastructure in rural areas. Major upgrading of Councils had to wait for some years.

A series of reports in the late 1970s and early 1980s indicated that Councils had serious shortcomings in their more regular operation. [2] The average quality of Councillors was low; able and educated men had more promising outlets. Seventy percent of permanent Council staff were not qualified for the posts they held, in terms of the official Schemes of Service. This was hardly surprising, given the near-total lack of spending on education before the 1960s. Job descriptions and procedures were inadequate; and in-service training was limited and ad hoc, often just a reward for seniority (Higgins, 1987). Qualified and competent staff were liable to be speedily transferred between Councils, in fire-brigade fashion; and to soon leave for other sectors. (The same applied for Land Boards.) The ULGS (though not the Unified Teaching Service) was marred by poor relations between its central controllers, the controlled staff, and Councillors; and consultation with ministries, chiefs and the public was also weak (Sarpong, 1978; Reilly, 1983). Staff deficiencies were most serious in technical areas and finance. Audit reports were heavy with criticism, year after year; but the system of accountability was flawed, for the supervisory agency and recipient of the reports - MLGL - was itself deeply implicated in Councils' financial administration, by its continual and thoroughgoing interventions, and its control of Council staff. District Councils had little independent revenue base, especially after central government made primary education free. In 1979/80 50% of even their recurrent budgets were covered by central grants, up from 20% in 1973/4.

The 1979 Local Government Structure Commission (LGSC) concluded that Councils had too limited capacity for any further devolution to be realistic at that time. It also argued that the quadri-partite local government system should be kept, with an important role for each of the bodies, and the dominance of none. There was little to be gained, and perhaps much to be lost, by putting all four parts under a single umbrella, whether it be that of the District Administration or Council. Unification does not make differences of interest or problems of coordination vanish, and it can reduce the channels for participation and mutual supervision. The Commission chairman argued elsewhere that disagreements between bodies are not necessarily wasteful, provided there are mechanisms for discussion and resolution; and that unifying all the bodies, under the Council,

could increase the possibility of some charismatic chiefs becoming locally dominant, and in general raise the danger of District-Centre conflict (Tordoff, 1978).

After reviewing the reports, central government agreed that all four institutions should be kept; and that Councils should be upgraded, not downgraded. It ruled that upgrading should be basically administrative, i.e. by giving more training rather than more authority; and that continuing and even strengthened central control was required. The LGSC recommendations to give Districts an automatic share of some central revenues were rejected, as were Districts' own revenue-raising proposals. The ceiling on local government tax was kept very low.

Some important changes occurred between the late 70s and the mid 80s. A Local Authorities Finance Unit was established in MLGL HQ, to support Councils. The number of staff in post in District Councils rose by 18% p.a. in 1978-86 (Egner, 1986:42). This covered even Council Works Departments, and their technical staff; at the same time the MLGL HQ technical support unit was created and expanded. Some Councils acquired extra planning officers. A large programme of Council staff training began in 1983, supported in particular by SIDA. The impact of these changes will be considered in Section 4.

3. THE SYSTEMS OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 Flexible plans with legal authority; the integration of development plans, budgets, and project planning

Having described institutions we can look at how they interact in the development programme. Government development planning in Botswana has been carefully formalized since around independence. Botswana was an impoverished nation, dependent until 1972 for outside support to cover even its recurrent budget. There was a premium on well-presented proposals and effective management, in order to attract outside resources. Once established, this system was maintained, even after finance alone had become less of a constraint. As a result, foreign donors have remained enthusiastic.

The formalization of development planning in Botswana is seen in various ways. Apart from the standard professional cadres, such as urban & regional planners, there are the large cadres of economist Planning Officers, of District Officers (for Development and for Lands) and Council Planning Officers. [1] The first edition of the Botswana "Planning Officers Manual" appeared in 1976. The third edition (1986) runs to 230 pages and is even on open sale, as being of wide interest and high quality, and as part of citizen information. Several other planning handbooks for specialist cadres have long been in use; including the equally detailed District

Planning Handbook (Local Govt. & Lands, 1978). Very many detailed reports have been commissioned and published (e.g. Lipton, 1978).

The medium-term National Development Plans are better prepared, written and presented than those of most developing countries, let alone of countries of similar size. The Plan for 1985-91, like its predecessors, is a formidable volume of over 400 double-columned pages, replete with tables and photographs. Published promptly in 1985, it includes around 100 pages systematically describing every project in the development programme. Plans have been based on a two-year phased interchange between the Cabinet, Ministries, Departments and Districts; and have then carried real weight within Government, nationally, and with international agencies. They act as basic reference sources on conditions, developments, strategy, sectors and projects. District medium-term Plans have been similarly substantial documents, not mimeoed shopping lists.

Are these stage-props of planning in Botswana actually useful? The simplest test is persistence:- one might expect that if they were all show and no delivery then after one or two cycles they would have fallen into decline. Instead, the system has had not just an ability to produce documents but also relatively high effectiveness, because of strong political backing, and realism plus flexibility in design, including its definite links between medium-term and project planning and annual budgeting. Plans have been more than detailed reviews plus statements of intentions. They have also been parts of a system of development management, which deserves examination as one key to why sector Ministries and local authorities have been able to on the whole act rapidly yet effectively. [5]

The Plan constrains the annual development budget, but can be updated simultaneously with it. It also constrains the project approval process but does not fully preempt it, for that process can respond to new information. An outline of the mechanisms is given in Box 4. This system of ordered flexibility is a sophisticated interpretation of the possibilities for planning in an environment of extreme unpredictability. (One must add that the system is also popular with MFDP since it allows it to retain a large degree of discretion.) There is major uncertainty concerning rainfall, cattle diseases, refugee influxes and foreign aid; and Botswana is a narrowly based and highly open economy which faces a fluctuating world market for its dominant export, as well as the ever present danger of squeeze and destabilization from South Africa. Caiden & Wildavsky's celebrated study (1974) described the problems with planning and budgeting in these sorts of conditions. Botswana experience suggests that there can be partial solutions to the problems. (Allan & Hinchliffe, 1982, give a similar analysis of another instructive case.)

The tight link between planning and budgeting ensures the relevance of planning and the direction of budgeting. The planning system also emphasises systematic processing and appraisal of government

projects, again because so many macro-variables are beyond government's control. Attempts at comprehensive planning would be misplaced - as opposed to making forecasts, on various sets of assumptions. This is almost obvious for a tiny open economy, but may also hold true for many larger, but still open and fragile, African economies - especially in the turbulent 1980s and, no doubt, 1990s. Such countries might have been misled by the planning approaches attempted earlier in vast and largely closed economies like the USSR, India and China.

The project planning system is itself realistic in its emphases, trying to obtain information on vital aspects of project conception, organization, and feasibility, rather than stressing rate-of-return calculations which may be based on partial and unreliable information. Various checklists and simplified guidelines are also used.

It is revealing that even a relatively well-staffed system has not adopted thoroughgoing cost-benefit analysis. The reasons are probably both logistical and political. Calculating social rates of return is time-consuming, skill-intensive and often indecisive (see Gasper, 1986). But even the proposals for simpler systematic valuation have not been fully adopted (e.g. those made by Chambers, 1977, and Lipton, 1978; putting shadow prices on skilled and unskilled labour, and on benefits to poverty groups). To do so would both reduce the degree of discretion held by the central decision-makers, and sometimes run counter to their personal economic interests and beliefs. Major donor-funded projects however do often incorporate full-scale cost-benefit analyses; and - perhaps more importantly - donors' and domestic planners' analyses of social priorities usually play a significant role at programme design stage.

Two categories of indirect cost receive special emphasis: the recurrent financial expenditures and manpower allocations that are implied by projects. The abundance of funds in the hands of government since the late 1970s brought the dangers of starving non-government sectors of skilled manpower, and of building-in recurrent government commitments which might not be sustainable in future economic, environmental or regional crises. It was decided not to maximize current growth through increasing the reliance on expatriate or immigrant manpower; indeed their numbers fell significantly after 1981. Detailed ceilings on government manpower have been defined and enforced since 1978. Recurrent budget ceilings are then set in view of these manpower ceilings, as well as of the revenue forecasts. In turn, the development budget is set subject to the constraints that the other two budget ceilings now put on the recurrent requirements that can be produced by new development projects. (There is of course some negotiation and iteration.)

BOX 4 - RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONAL PLAN, BUDGETS AND PROJECTS

Development expenditures cannot legally be authorized unless they (i) come under a project heading and description already incorporated in the National Plan, and (ii) do not exceed the Plan's specified ceiling (the Total Estimated Cost - TEC) for authorizations under that heading. This set of headings, descriptions and ceilings is under regular review. [2] The main mechanisms of updating are incorporated in annual budgeting. As part of the development expenditure Estimates that are prepared each year one can update the legally binding project headings, descriptions and TECs, i.e. update the details of the Plan. This is done on the basis of an Annual Project Review. There is also the possibility of updating via Supplementary Estimates during sessions of the House of Assembly.

The approved annual Development Estimates usually indicate more expenditure than the Finance and Planning Ministry expects or will accept. From experience it knows that significant shortfalls will occur, and feels it can roughly predict their overall extent but not their exact distribution. Ministries and Councils prove unable to in total spend as much in projects as they hope to, due to implementation constraints of many types, including problems in reaching agreement with donors. [3]

This "overplanning" is not reckless. Requests for development funds must do more than refer to the Plan and Estimates. They must provide a detailed project memorandum (or refer to an already accepted one), which must be found both adequate and feasible given the current availability of funds. [4] For the annual development Estimates to grant spending authority they would have to be based on full project details, presented in the middle of the preceding financial year, a year or so earlier than is required under the more flexible project memorandum system.

In addition, the annual Development Estimates' exact figures for expected expenditures in the current year do not even constitute necessary grounds for release of funds to spending Ministries. They are indicative but not binding. Ministries which can spend faster will not necessarily be prevented from doing so, provided they stay within (or obtain authorized amendment of) the Plan description and TEC for that project, and meet the general criteria of project adequacy. The system is geared to not slowing up spending, in a situation where one cannot predict in advance just when and where it will be possible or will be delayed.

In the late 70s and early 80s funds committed on the basis of an approved project memorandum could be for the estimated expenditures over a number of years, not just the current year, with a near-guarantee that funds could be carried over from one year to the next. This system depends on minimum predictable revenues not being too low, and on controllers being free from irrational fears. Letting Ministries spend above their annual Estimate for a project as long as they stay within its Plan-period TEC has some dangers. It built up pressure for raising the TECs in easy-to-spend areas (usually urban) which may not be priorities. There has lately been a slight change. MFDP now sets a ceiling for each Ministry; a project's TEC can only be increased if the Ministry is below its ceiling or is willing to cut another project (Botswana, 1985:73).

Here again budgeting and development project planning are interconnected. Economists have been just as much involved in setting the recurrent and manpower ceilings as have financial and personnel administrators; and all project documents are required to spell out their implications for recurrent finance and manpower. The system has been rather cumbersome, and imperfect in its detailed workings (e.g. in sometimes trying to rule on each individual new post rather than just on ceilings by category). However, giving careful attention to these key areas has no doubt been better than ignoring them. [6]

3.2 District development planning system

"..not only seems to work but should provide a valuable model for other countries ...[It] is simple...based on practical experience....[and] uses existing institutions ...not...new forms of organisation; [and it has important political support,] although..not always...as enthusiastic as it might have been" (Reilly, 1981:28).

The district planning system is supposed to link together all the district-level agents - i.e. to blend deconcentration and devolution - and connect them with the national planning set-up. The main claims made for this system are not so much as a machinery for participation from village level, but more as a system of coordination from district and sub-district level upwards. There is a lack of formal published research on the impact of the system. Discussion of its effectiveness has to be somewhat impressionistic.

At district level, the planning system officially centres on the District Development Committee. This is chaired by the DC, and includes representatives of Council, and relevant NGOs and central Government departments present at District level. The District Officer (Development) is the executive secretary, carrying main responsibility for the preparation, promotion and monitoring of annual and medium-term District Plans. He/she works under the DC, but also routinely reports to MLGL HQ, especially the Planning Unit. He/she should naturally work closely with the Council Planning Officer(s), who are concerned with detailed planning and implementation of projects undertaken through Councils. The DC and Council Secretary are designated "joint District Plan managers", to report to the DDC.

The DDC has a number of sub-committees. These can vary between districts, but always include the following:- Production Development Committee [1]; Extension Teams to coordinate extension and consultation activities [2]; Land Use Planning Advisory Group (or Unit; LUPAG) [3]; and a District Drought Committee, usually chaired by the DC. In the 1980s districts have also proceeded with planning of "Communal First Development Areas" (CFDAs). These are parts of the

communal lands in the district, where programmes will be concentrated for some years. Sub-districts are being established if necessary. The new CFDA coordinator post takes over main responsibility for this work from DO(D)s and DO(L)s.

The DDC does not allocate resources, with a few exceptions (notably under drought relief). It seeks to influence and coordinate the activities of other agencies:- central Ministries, District Administration, Council and VDCs, Land Boards, NGOs and the private sector. These obtain funds independently of the DDC. Ministry departments (including in MLGL) apply, via their Ministry headquarters, to MFDP; project-by-project. We noted that they still provide 80% of development expenditure in the districts.

VDCs can make project proposals to Councils or DDCs. Councils and Land Boards apply project-by-project to MLGL HQ, which can approve some small expenditures or within programmes which have already been approved in detail. Otherwise the approval of MFDP is also required. The amounts available as block grants for District allocation to VDCs are very small in total amount (Botswana, 1985:78). NGO funds are therefore important for small village projects. Attempts are made to ensure that these projects too are reviewed by Council and the DDC (Ségodi, 1988).

Prescribed operation of the overall system - including on financial and programme planning for Councils - is described in a District Planning Handbook of over 200 pages. It has received favourable outside comments, for its clear presentation and its emphasis on practical procedures.

While to a large extent the procedures for planning and budgeting of locally controlled projects are the same as those we described earlier for nationally controlled projects, one significant difference is in the case of major projects that are really programmes. Such "projects" consist of dozens of relatively small expenditures, divided between many locations in each district, as well as across districts. The major Council development expenditures, on primary school and health post construction and extension, have been of this type. The individual project components are too small and too numerous to be treated individually at national level; yet central government considers the programmes to be too important in themselves and too costly in total for Councils to be given full control.

The system that is operated is similar to a recurrent budget. In effect a composite project for all Councils is prepared each year for each of the national project heads, such as primary school construction. Districts submit annual expenditure plans for these projects. They of course make reference to central guidelines, but the centre (MLGL and MFDP) can revise and trim the proposals.

Relatively small projects, of these types and others, can thus go through more clearance stages than comparable or larger central government projects:- they should be cleared by the VDC, and by Council's technical departments and Planning Unit and Council itself; by the DDC; then by MLGL, and MFDP; and sometimes also by a donor (perhaps even by both local and head offices). Funding in some areas was simplified from the late 70s, notably under SIDA's flexible District Development Sector Support programme-aid umbrella (DDSS). This gave the local SIDA office considerable powers of approval for projects under broadly specified headings. Passage through so many levels inevitably gives some delays in expenditure. Approval may come after the start of the financial year; and only then can Councils start tendering projects - which is a major task on construction programmes that cover many small contracts in scattered locations. Districts press for central government to commit funds for the medium-term, to aid forward planning and smooth implementation. But that runs counter to standard financial practice and the caution and convenience of central government, which likes to keep as much discretionary power as possible to itself. Projects which are really programmes, i.e. are highly divisible, offer considerable discretion and the option of being slowed down or accelerated according to changing conditions. There can be costs of proceeding in this cautious way. It is not easy to suddenly speed up a multi-part system; but the centre fears that it could become equally hard to slow it down. Conceivably central government could give medium-term commitments on priority expenditures, and leave the year-to-year uncertainties to fall on lower priority programmes. One problem here is the typical lack of consensus on priorities; every programme and every location feels that it is a priority.

District Plans do not have the legal status of National Plans. Government as a whole is required to take note rather than to approve or reject. However the central District Plans Committee does provide guidelines, reactions and vetting. It is chaired by MLGL, and includes MFDP representatives and Town & Regional Planning. Five-year District Plans were first prepared for 1973-78. These had limited direct influence, but did build up a data base and some experience. [4] The 1977-82 District Plans were a large-scale exercise, which took into account the 1976-81 National Plan and sought to elaborate and advance its contents at district-level. They reflected considerable village-level discussion. They also provided an input for the period 1979-82 into the subsequent 1979-85 National Plan. Annual plans were then prepared, to break-down and up-date the medium-term plans; including by trying to reach a common understanding with ministries on their programme phasing. The onus in practice often lies on the District authorities to seek coordination. Progress reports are presented to DDC meetings. Action instructions are recorded from the meetings, typically requiring or communicating information from or to various agencies. [5]

It will be apparent now that there are many types of planning going on at sub-national level. The discussions of "regional planning" can become confusing for this reason. One can usefully review the different types, using the classification of varieties of regional-level planning that has been provided by Conyers (1985). In her terms it appears that, at least compared to other countries, the Botswana system is relatively well developed in two areas:- the management of national sectoral programmes, as sets of project expenditures; and the district-level planning and negotiation that tries to improve the coordination between these programmes and with other activities.

3.3 Operating style and facilitating conditions

"The Botswana formula is specifically non-directive. It complements, and does not conflict with, the normal sectoral approach.....[here, as elsewhere, the Botswana] rule has been at all times to work through the system [and thus strengthen it]." (Leach, 1981:268)

Regional planning as negotiation is inherently demanding, in requiring much liaison work; and frequently frustrating, in having only influence not control. There are standard complaints, both from busy ministry officials at being required to attend large meetings with long agendas which mostly hardly concern them, and from local government staff at the absence of central government officials. Whether frustration and disappointment outweigh achievement will depend on the energy and skill of the liaisers, the attitudes and interest of those they deal with, and on the criterion used: whether one sees all coordination as an improvement, or imperfect coordination as a tragedy. If one takes the non-tragic view, then the Botswana approach seems to have operated valuably - contrary to some expectations that regional planning must have fiscal or legal autonomy if it is to achieve anything. The work of many enthusiastic District Officers and council officers has had an influence on sectoral ministries: first, via their local staff, especially if those have delegated powers; and secondly, directly, by correspondence and visits (e.g. to Ministry Planning Units, especially the designated "District link-man"), and at the well-attended annual National District Development Conference (NDDC) and frequent other seminars and workshops (Reilly, 1981:44-6). [1]

One condition underlying reasonable operation of this system is that sub-national officers, even the district-level officers in a small country, sometimes have significant powers; and are easily accessible rather than stuck away in provincial centres. Integrated Rural Administration Centres are now found in several Districts, and jointly house various central and local government departments. Similarly, in a small system, district-level officers can relatively easily go directly to national level when necessary, thanks to funding for transport and telecommunications, or the easy

availability of lifts. Other facilitating factors are: the wealth of research on rural development in Botswana, which gives district planning materials to draw on; and the limited tribalism and other factionalism, so that a heavy reliance on informal coordination is workable. [2]

There has also been some enthusiasm and esprit amongst district-level planning cadres. One factor originally was reliance on expatriate volunteers, who were generally committed to their location and job (e.g. as judged by regular overtime) and not diverted by other demands (including the precautions necessitated by permanent residence!). The reverse side of this was their transience, and liability to underestimate vital political, social and administrative matters.

There have been other factors too behind enthusiasm :- training and backup from MLGL HQ, the optimistic national mood, and, very importantly, the relatively easy availability of resources (funds, transport and other equipment), which allows planning to be about something and done with something.

Much of this assessment carries over to the planning system as a whole. Helping sustain 12% p.a. growth over two decades, and a faster yet orderly growth of public spending, is a notable feat. There have been massive increases in functioning social infrastructure, both in the areas of central and of local government responsibility. (E.g. by the mid-80s over 85% of the primary school age population was at school. However, data on the quality of primary education and health are hard to find.)

A feature we stressed is that planning has been integrated into development management. Planners have typically been closely involved in much development administration and policy discussion as well as in project and budgetary matters. This partly reflects the comparative weakness of administrative cadres, but is also a deliberate choice, to bolster planners' influence and standing.

There are the usual tensions between MFDP, the Ministerial Planning Units, and Districts. Each is aware of factors liable to be overlooked by the others. There are also standard problems in evolution away from a previously more centralized planning system, as and when Ministerial and District units grow in experience and size. The central Ministry may indulge in false comparisons, between the actual quality of work done outside and the notional quality of its own interventions, based on a wishful belief in its own unlimited capacities. Operation of the Planning Officer cadre is still on the whole relatively smooth, with much informal coordination. For example, around half the cadre will be present for a meeting in MFDP early every Monday morning, to exchange information and views. [3] Districts are not part of this circle, but have a number of at least potential representatives: from MLGL, the "link-men" in each Ministry, and the Rural Development Unit.

The Rural Development Unit (RDU) in MFDP illustrates the potential advantages and conditions behind intensive informal coordination centering on the planning ministry. MFDP carries portfolio responsibility for rural development coordination. The RDU is the secretariat of the policy-making Rural Development Council composed of Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. The Unit has the right simply to receive information and commission studies, and the responsibility to spread information, provide advice and assistance, bring people together, and ensure that important matters receive attention.

Leach, Senior Adviser to the RDU in 1973-79, proposes that the Unit had a significant role in the 70s in promoting development in rural areas. It did this by coordination and persuasion, rather than by claiming powers that conflicted with those of the executive agencies or with their operational requirements. He argues that: "Too often co-ordination is confused with direction. ...Coordination is, in fact, better achieved through communication and information linkages, through consensus and negotiation, than by directives and orders..." (1981:268-9).

Such coordination depends on, firstly, good institutional location. It is helpful to keep rural development prominent in the Planning Ministry, rather than leave it mainly to a more marginal agency, such as a generalist ministry that lacks a power base. (Note the contrast here with the fate of some ministries or departments of Rural or Community Development elsewhere, e.g. in Zimbabwe or India.)

Secondly, it requires a work culture that puts value on discussion and compromise. Tswana culture shares these values.

Thirdly, it depends on "an infinite capacity to take trouble over the nuts and bolts and details - organizing meetings, discussions, visits, tours, seminars, conferences, transport, etc." (ibid.:269). This raises questions about the perpetuation of such a system: what will motivate bureaucrats to go on taking infinite pains? - especially as the system expands and as an inspiring post-independence era ends.

Finally, and relatedly, successful informal coordination depends on good judgement, in knowing when and how to infringe on others' time. Without that, people will soon weary of strings of ad hoc and single purpose meetings (Pearce, 1986).

Given these various conditions, as well as the others mentioned earlier, it may not be surprising to see reports that intensive informal coordination has worked on average less well at village level. [4]

To conclude, the flexibility of the economic planning system in Botswana is precisely what enables it to retain a grip; the plan and the budget stay in touch. The second major feature that we stressed, the use of intensive informal coordination, is closely connected. Flexible planning requires these intensive information exchanges; and the maintenance of a central grip requires both the

flexibility and the interaction, in order to stay broadly acceptable.

There have been some favourable conditions associated with the system's reported success:- the presence of relatively large planning cadres for a small country; the greater ease of close liaison in a small system (though it can still work in decentralized subsystems in larger countries); the absence of very strong competition for staff, from a large private sector or foreign neighbours; considerable career rewards for many planners (in terms of job quality, perks and promotion prospects); and the relaxed political setting. Associated with several of these are the favourable economic conditions. The Botswana lesson is not of how to turn water into wine, but how to turn potential successes into real successes.

4. ISSUES AND STRAINS IN THE 1980s

4.1 Emerging problems

Section 3 concentrated on strengths of the Botswana planning system, seen as an adaptation to the constraints of a very small open economy, and as a machinery for pursuing government priorities and taking opportunities within the given constraints - especially project-aid opportunities. We have not commented much on the priorities themselves, or on the persistence and growth of extreme inequalities amidst the economic boom, or the high degree of concentration of wealth and activity in Gaborone. (By the early 1980s still only a third of government development expenditure was in rural areas where four-fifths of the population lived; Mmusi et al, 1982:18.) Picard (1987) wisely warns us against a "Botswanaphilia" comparable to the "Tanzophilia" of the early and mid 70s. Our discussion has emphasized system-rationale rather than strategy evaluation.

Botswana's economic success is vulnerable, as it rests largely on a single exhaustible mineral export and is in a fragile natural environment. Years of continuing drought in the 1980s have left arable agriculture on its knees and many more villagers without cattle. While there is considerable institutional robustness and phlegm, they will be tested by growing problems. Enormously rapid urbanization is underway, including as the "major villages" become in effect small towns; and there is a marked growth in media, education, opposition parties, and urban unemployment. The period of super-growth is probably ending, as Botswana already exceeds South Africa in diamond production; although major new mineral exports are still likely.

While the drought relief schemes in the 1980s and the ongoing provision of physical infrastructure for rural districts have been effective, the attempts to advance rural employment and incomes in productive and sustainable ways - neither mainly about physical infrastructure nor as crash programmes - have to date been far less

successful. Just as with ARDP, the successes are with essentially distributive programmes that are less constrained by the demands of productive efficiency.

What are needed are jobs as numerous as those generated in relief programmes, but ones that are more productive. The formal sector provides employment for only about 20% of the population over the age of 15. Formal sector employment grew at over 7% p.a. in 1968-83, but absorbed much less than half the increase in the labour force (Isaksen, 1981:17; & Botswana, 1985). (The numbers of Botswana officially employed in South Africa fell considerably; e.g. the proportion fell from 40% of formal employment of Botswana nationals in 1966 to 19% in 1980.) For the NDP VI period, 1985-91, formal sector employment growth was predicted to slow to less than 6% p.a.

The problems in creating large-scale productive employment are formidable: small markets, remoteness, the instability and destabilization coming from South Africa, and the competition from large established producers in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Membership of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) provides premium revenues, which government can use for infrastructure and distribution, but it further constrains industrial development. Finally, there is the very difficult physical environment. Longstanding attempts to advance peasant arable agriculture have had no success to date; and nothing on offer has matched the new attractions in towns and the urbanizing major villages. Agriculture is now a smaller proportion of GDP than even manufacturing. [1] While the country might become in part a rentier, drawing income from its savings placed abroad, this will not sustain satisfactory livelihoods for the majority.

Some authors argue that development of productive employment is undermined by biases in the government system, for example towards fiscal conservatism, the formal sector, or over-centralization. Government has certainly been fiscally conservative, and perhaps preoccupied with sectors that either generate government revenues (mines and imports) or elite incomes (beef), or are relatively easy channels for expenditure, namely physical and social infrastructure. (See e.g. Isaksen, 1981.) These leanings may be furthered by some tendencies of the international aid system (see Morgan, 1979, on the Botswana case.) Official discussions appear to be dominated by how to further assist and encourage formal sector enterprise.

For the 1970s Isaksen argued that influential expatriates in MFDP were biased to fiscal conservatism, due to their own career requirements; but reverse arguments can equally be made. [2] More significantly, as he noted, many had been influenced by Zambia. The real issue might not be one of increasing expenditure but instead its redirection. Yet Isaksen did not specify areas for this. He also acknowledged the limit set to spending by domestic leaders'

decision not to bring in many more expatriates; and the vulnerability of the economy, which was later underlined by 1982's diamond market problems.

The electorate, as we noted in section 2.1, has been largely poor, unmobilized and, to date, easily pacified by expenditures. It is probably easier to get mobilization around policies like high minimum wages or the provision of quasi-urban infrastructure, than for the broad and indirect policies that might be needed for furthering productive employment (Isaksen, 1981:32); Lipton's 1978 report had little short-run impact. Wages policy is an area where MFDP has until lately been weak, reflecting its focus on public sector projects and revenues. Legally specified minimum wage rates soared from the mid 1970s. This had direct and severe impact on the viability of many NGOs that were trying to generate new types of productive rural employment - notably the Brigades and the Regional Development Associations. (See van Rensburg, 1984, and Inger, 1985.) Even the higher wage rates applied in the public sector had important indirect effects: drawing people away from the NGOs, as well as raising worker expectations and demands.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry and other government agencies made various conventional attempts through the 1970s and 80s to encourage new formal sector jobs. Modest but expensive progress was made. The "factory shells" programme was a particular failure and was handed over to Councils (Commerce & Industry, 1982). In 1982 a Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) was set up, offering 100% grants to new businesses, subject to a few conditions. The official evaluation of its first two years estimated that the average financial cost of the extra jobs for which it was responsible was up to P15,000 (though less for the small grants allocated by Districts, and for the medium-size projects administered from the centre). [3] There were also opportunity costs, as government staff (e.g. the Rural Industrial Officers) were diverted to administering the scheme. The new business that was supported was mainly urban; and often represented diversification by the largest cattle owners.

A recent comprehensive survey of possible small industries indicated very few worth further attention (Egner, 1984). Interest has returned to the idea of labour-intensive development projects (LIDEPS), which was effectively shelved during NDP V because all resources were taken by the drought relief effort. These projects are more demanding than drought relief, where labourers may be desperate, willing to take almost any wage, and are not pressed to work hard. (See Box 5.)

Lessons can be learnt from the successes of labour-intensive Council road maintenance as well as of drought relief. The former offers a model for the systematic build-up of technical and management methods, and of technical cadres; and both of them

BOX 5 - CONTINUING DROUGHT RELIEF? OR DROUGHT RELIEF PLUS?

Egner argues for the continuation of relief programmes at high levels, in view of the very low and even declining living standards of perhaps most rural dwellers even before the 1980s droughts. It is also wasteful to repeatedly build up drought relief organization and then wind it down. MLGL accepts this. Drought relief might become a standing social security programme, for it is popular too with peasants and politicians.

The drought programme covers "relief" and "rehabilitation", not "development". Hay (1988) argues that this conventional division is inadequate. Attention and resources are likely to be exhausted before a "development" stage. In addition, some dwellers can hardly be rehabilitated to their earlier position. Severe droughts bring not only temporary declines in rural incomes and employment; many rural dwellers permanently lose assets, and may leave agriculture. Relief programmes should therefore also try to generate sustainable new jobs, in agriculture and outside. In other words, can relief and rehabilitation stages contain a development orientation? Hay admits that typical public works schemes are neither chosen nor owned by, nor largely benefit, the destitute people who build them; but he hopes that public works could somehow be reoriented - perhaps by administrative goodwill - towards the poorest groups. Holm & Cohen note that such targeting could meet broad local resistance (1986:23).

The 1981 drought consultants stressed the need to distinguish between the distributive labour-based relief programmes (LBRPs), for fast response, and more productive labour-intensive development projects (LIDEPs), which need more careful design and management. The skilled manpower needed for LIDEPs could take many years to build up - and is then hard to keep in rural areas. Hay, for one, queries the necessity, feasibility and effectiveness of conventionally planned and staffed projects, and believes in "a large [dormant] pool of local organizational and management skills [that] is typically overlooked" (1988:1124). He argues that supporting community development initiatives will no doubt produce many failures, but still a higher return to public resources than would reliance only on conventional projects. Here is one central, classic, area of difference between centralizers and decentralizers. The former group are likely to reject Hay's claims. They argue too that a strategy of a permanent LBRP dole, which redistributes some mineral revenues to rural areas, might not survive a decline in those revenues or simply the ever-growing pressure of population. Already in the Sixth National Plan (NDP VI) document, the rate of population growth in a high scenario exceeds that of GDP growth in a pessimistic scenario. Botswana is in any case not Kuwait. It is still a low income country, with a per capita income in 1987 of around US \$900.

illustrate the possibility of by-passing the urban-focussed minimum wage system by a special dispensation to rural local authorities. The road maintenance and improvement project has been prepared as carefully as drought relief, building up slowly from a pilot phase in Central District. It has now been extended to the other districts, having proved its cost-effectiveness. (The inevitably modest technical standards fail to impress some of the national elite in their new cars, or to end the calls for fast capital-intensive upgrading.) Note that both cases involve decentralization.

Similarly, one of the few industries that was indicated as having good possibilities is tourism, which might lend itself well to promotion by local authorities (Egner, 1987:131). MLGL did not accept that Councils were ready to assume this as a statutory responsibility (1987:21). Indeed Councils have shown little interest in directly promoting production, and feel it to be the responsibility of other bodies. Councils' Commercial Officers do little more than issue licenses. District plans have emphasized physical and social infrastructure, not production, though this is changing in some CFDA's.

4.2. De- and re-centralization in the 1980s

The centre's response to a decline in diamond revenues during 1981-82 was to apply both financial stringency and closer control. This control appears to be continuing subsequently, related (in the centre's mind) to the ongoing drought, the fragile international situation and, most importantly, an expected levelling-off of diamond revenues, even if now at much more than fully recovered levels. One issue is whether the centre is overestimating its own capacity for close control, in contrast to the growing decentralized capacity; but the centre feels it knows better than others what this capacity is!

There are various views on the present allocation of powers. Box 6 gives a simplified summary picture. In the following section we will illustrate these views, as seen in the ongoing discussions. In the mid-to-late 1980s certain steps seem to strengthen decentralization. There have also been counter-trends. One needs a multi-stranded picture of something as complex as a resource allocation system; nor can one expect irreversible trends.

Many of the problems with local authorities continue. [1] Audit reports on Councils remain critical. The Local Government Structure Commission (LGSC) had recommended an independent Local Authorities Public Accounts Committee, to give a properly separated system of review. Government accepted this in 1982 but it remained only on paper until 1987; and the new central Local Authorities Finance Unit

BOX 6 - VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT DECENTRALIZATION

For sake of contrast the views can be somewhat exaggerated.

- an official brochure view:- the present system is a fine blend and balance of old and new, and of deconcentration and devolution; it spreads risks and opportunities, across interlinked institutions which mutually support, supervise and complement each other.

- one informal central government view, sometimes found underneath the brochure, argues why no further decentralization (especially territorial) should be contemplated: sector approaches work; decentralization is often just a luxury, with high costs in time and effectiveness; and devolved institutions in particular, including Councils, are chronically incompetent, cannot fulfill their allotted responsibilities, and need to be directed.

- the reply from decentralized institutions, especially Councils (e.g. as reported in Picard, 1979b), is that their relative weakness was because they have been starved of resources and authority, and treated like children.

- radical/political-science explanation of this marginalization suggests that devolved institutions in particular are seen as potential threats to the interests of ruling elites. Elites then wish to retain close local control, for example via the District Administration, and to keep Councils weak in case they become centres of opposition, such as to land policies that favour large cattle owners (Picard & Morgan, 1985).

- there are explanations for central power in terms of a logic of urban bias, that tends to keep the District Administration and deconcentrated staff weak too. These arguments note the social and career considerations that orient staff towards the capital. The dominant capital-city technocrats are also absorbed in a separate (and more professionally exciting) world: controlling financial demands, obtaining aid and maximizing its use, and so on; some hardly ever visit District centres (or remoter locations) let alone work there. This last sort of explanation is still compatible with increased interest in decentralization when aid donors press for it. Even the explanation in terms of ruling elite interests can accommodate a new concern with decentralization, if perceptions of those interests evolve with time, e.g. if elites come to feel more secure, or to consider that security is best furthered by allowing opposition rather than trying to undermine it.

- a "balanced" view (e.g. Reilly, 1983) accepts part of each the earlier views, i.e. that the local government system is soundly designed, but was left short of resources; that there are of course both structural and political limits to decentralization, and that while Councils should be strengthened they can themselves be elitist (like the kgotla); whereas deconcentrated agencies have a considerable role to play too in furthering local developments. So it concludes, as in the brochure - but going beyond it - that a mixture is best, but with some further degree of both devolution and deconcentration.

does not increase Councils' ability to meet their responsibilities. MLGL officers (actually Finance and Planning Officers seconded from MFDP) may even have intervened more than before in issuing funds to Councils. Far from being treated like parastatals, Councils were sometimes placed lower than Ministry departments. For example, release of development funds was in some instances blocked if Councils failed to supply reports on a quarterly basis (Egner, 1986:92). Despite augmentation of staff, the implementation ratio for Council projects barely increased. [2]

Dependence on central grants increased to around 85% of recurrent budgets by 1986/7. It will have increased yet further (Segodi implies to 98%) after central government abolished local government tax, in 1987. There is clearly no intention of reducing the fiscal dependence of local government. The abolition was also however one of the easiest and surest ways of transferring income to all the rural population, and was no doubt very popular during the continuing drought.

The current major training push for local government seems to be making reasonable progress in terms of numbers of trainees (Egner, 1987). The approach being taken - after redesign by a local consultant - emphasises in-service training and local trainers, through an upgraded ULGS Training Unit and a new cadre of Personnel/Training Officers in local government. Where institutional training is called for, the emphasis is on use of existing local institutions, not new ones or foreign courses (Higgins, 1987.)

It is early as yet to judge impact. There may be the standard problems of course status, and of individuals preferring to go to the capital, or better to Europe or America, even if the training they receive is of less job relevance. In addition there are factors which can limit the effect of training alone. Many staff are too old and/or underqualified to be likely to benefit from formal training (though the programme does include on-the-job training.) A key target for training should be the elected Councillors, whose educational backgrounds remain very weak.

Filling senior technical posts is still a problem, and recruitment of expatriates has been turned to. ULGS have remained near the bottom in government's allocation of graduates (Botswana, 1985:90) and of postgraduate scholarships (Egner, 1987:47). Many of the graduates sent to Councils soon left. In-service reassignment of good staff is almost never from centre to districts, but often happens in the other direction, especially within the Local Government ministry itself. Staff willingness is of course one factor here. In 1981 it was agreed to make the administrators of ULGS belong to it themselves; but that would render them liable to work in Councils. It had not been implemented six years later, when it was repudiated by MLGL (1987:13). [3]

Councils' dissatisfaction with ULGS remained strong, both over operating problems and the very fact of Gaborone civil servants

managing the staff of elected bodies. The Structure Commission's proposal for an independent Local Government Service Commission - with a status commensurate to the size of the local government sector - remained rejected.

Major expansion in local authority resources is due to continue during NDP VI (1985-91). ULGS is at last represented on Government's graduate allocation committee; and ULGS conditions of service are being equated to central government's. Reilly (1983) queries why this capacity-building did not occur in the 1970s. Councils' operating problems were known, and donor funds would have been easily available. Implicitly, central government matters received strong priority; and there was some fear of the growth of opposition parties. But the previous decade was also packed with rapid changes that absorbed official attention. The fact that capacity-building eventually moved into high gear in the 1980s, after the 1978-81 reports, could suggest that it was not so much blocked in the 1970s as hardly considered.

Picard (1979b, 1985) has reported that in the mid-70s even most District Administration officers held Councils in low regard. Most held the Tribal Administration to be more important. A significant minority of District Administration and other deconcentrated officers felt that their role included controlling Councils, not just advising and interacting (Picard & Morgan, 1985:268-274). One would expect that Councils were sometimes viewed equally condescendingly - if and when thought of - in the citadels of central ministries, not least in some key sections of Finance or Agriculture. [4]

In summarizing a national workshop on participation, Tsiane and Youngman described the prevailing view in Ministries: "participation is conceived as primarily an element of development planning and ..as the domain of public officers rather than politicians.... participation [is] consultation for better planning and service-delivery"; and to participate is to be be a recipient in a government programme and listen to official addresses (1986:viii). These administrative and centralist biases and the associated planning philosophy are unfavourable to devolution. Together with any opposition from ruling politicians, they would help to explain why, in Egner's terms, "administrative" solutions to local authorities' problems have been preferred, rather than "political" solutions which give "local authorities" clearer authority. MLGL has for example rejected the proposal that Councils should have more power to decide spending priorities between sectors (1987:20-1).

The upgrading of the District Administration in the mid-80s is consistent with these analyses. It is also consistent though with the view that DCs and District Officers need high levels of skills to be effective in development coordination; and DCs have not received the formal prefectorial powers of Provincial or District Governors in many other countries. The DC does now outrank the Council Secretary. Correspondingly all DC posts were reselected in

1986-7. A new scheme of training gives the District Administration a more attractive career path than the ULGS, with guaranteed foreign postgraduate studies for DOs.

Note however that some central Ministries tend to ignore District Administrations and DDCs just as much as they do Councils. Indeed the upgrading of the DC post may partly be a response to that. Some Ministries, notably Agriculture, for long declined to align their operational districts with the administrative districts. In 1986 they were instructed to do so. Central Ministries are absorbed in their ambitious work programmes. This produces both a self-righteous belief in centralization ("look at how much we are achieving [and compare it with the feeble Councils]"), and a self-licensing ignorance (of what are local authorities' problems, capacities, and achievements). In MFDP in particular, too few of the dominant economists have (or had) worked extensively in other Ministries, let alone in Districts. Egner reports that some of them view Council projects as "social" and hence not to be considered for domestic funding, but passed to possible "soft" (usually Scandinavian) donors (1987:90). The Rural Development Unit in MFDP used to contain a series of ex-DCs and DOs, and perhaps worked to "soften" the economists and financial administrators; but it seems to have relatively declined in the mid-80s.

The Ministry of Health is currently somewhat of an exception to what has just been said. Egner reports good cooperation between the Ministry and the Councils, with a large expansion of the former's Regional Health Teams and of the latter's health staff, culminating in 1986 in transfer of the Health Teams to Councils. He claims that, judged by the conventional indicators, "Botswana now has the best rural health record in Africa" (1986:110); though other accounts are less favourable (Sterkenburg, 1987).

Recent medium-term District Plans have been restricted to mainly focus on implementation of the existing National Plan, and not also provide a major input to its successor. The 1983-86 Plans were started rather late and at a time of considerable staff turnover. After they had been prepared, the MFDP 1983 Mid-Term Review in effect declared them to be obsolete because of now perceived revenue problems. They were never even fully printed. Later, government revenues proved to be higher, not lower, than had been assumed by the guidelines originally issued for the 1983/6 Plans (Egner, 1986:94).

Tordoff (1988) questions whether the work put into very detailed district plans is still justified. From 1985 there has been an MLGL Budget Priorities Committee, which allocates funds between MLGL projects within a total ceiling set by MFDP. The committee has no direct representation of, nor even obligatory consultation with, DDCs and Councils; nor does MLGL propose that it should (1987:18). Allocation of development funds is on an annual basis, and project-by-project; with allocations announced a few weeks before the new

financial year, and not actually released until well into it. Districts' development funds are thus treated in the same way as recurrent funds, and Districts are not being given indications of the minimum sums they can plan around for the years beyond the coming one. According to Egner this was one factor behind a decline in quality of the District Plans for 1986-89, which he describes as still estimable analyses of conditions and themes, but programmatically now closer to shopping-lists than before (Egner, 1987:103). Even within the annual allocations the degree of central control has in some cases increased. From 1978 DDCs had the power to allocate sums up to P 10,000 for some types of project. In 1984 this power was withdrawn or lapsed. (In 1987 MLGL supported Egner's recommendation to restore the power, up to a ceiling of P30,000; *ibid.*:16, 90-1.) In various other areas, centralized management has grown, often related to the project procedure requirements of non-"soft" donors.

Investment targets for Councils for NDP VI are even less than their NDP V achievement. The very large scheduled increases in recurrent budgets are primarily for Councils to operate established infrastructure and services. It is possible that district-level capacity had declined temporarily in some areas, due to rapid localization. Localization has partly come in waves, with a whole cadre being targetted for rapid replacement through a donor-supported project, rather than a more gradual localization across many cadres at the same time. For example, the DO(D) and CPO cadres were fully localized in 1980-84. As a result they were staffed in part by non-economist new graduates considered not good enough for the central Planning Officer cadre, which takes the pick and declines to extend its coverage to district work. But while those with no taste for district work probably soon leave, Tordoff reports that a fair number of the new district staff have done well. Unfortunately at the same time the MLGL Planning Unit which supports and supervises them was often seriously understaffed (1988:189).

There is a more important problem, of career structure, that leads to frustration and resignations amongst district-level planners. The absence of a clear career progression for these cadres did not raise problems as long as they were staffed by expatriates; but is now a major issue. DO(D)s, DO(L)s and CPOs are excluded from the professional grades of the central hierarchies of economists, town planners, agriculturalists, et al. In theory, rotation of staff between centre and districts would be good for both; but it may be resisted by those already ensconced at the centre. Incorporation of local staff into central hierarchies might also be resisted by Councils and DCs. Another option for the District Officers, especially DO(D)s, is to make the District Administration their normal indicated promotion route. However, if DCs retain a political control role rather than become District Development Directors, this option could require a redefinition of the DO(D) role to make it similar to that of a Zimbabwean Deputy District Administrator. That officer works mainly but not entirely on development programmes (in

contrast to Zimbabwe's District Rural Development Officers). The upgrading of DCs does at least allow scope for more promotion steps for the officers below them, leaving the higher-fliers to either take the step into Commissionership or transfer out of the District Administration.

Despite these various strains, there is little reason to believe that local-level capacity in general has declined relative to the centre's. Central planning units too have been affected by rapid turnover and localization and by vacancies; whereas for the District-level, much training is underway, cadres are being expanded, and many specialized posts are now emerging to reduce the total load (if not the coordination load) previously carried by the generalist planners.

Egner queries whether Councils' increased capacity is being well harnessed, for executing even existing activities, let alone new statutory functions. From a project-by-project analysis, he argues that the disappointing implementation record for local government projects in the NDP V period, despite the increase in Council manpower, was due less to District-level incapacity - the stereotype derived from the 1970s - than to blockages in MLGL HQ and MFDP: in making policy decisions, dealing with donors, and writing project memoranda, and in the centralized management of procurement and construction. If the main blockages were at District-level, how were they able to implement so much extra drought relief work in 1983-5? (Egner, 1986:82-90). If blockages are to be found at the centre, this suggests a possible contradiction between increasing resources for District level activity yet also increasing central control.

From central policymakers' viewpoint, the ability of lower level bodies to spend fast can understandably sometimes be felt as part of the problem rather than of the answer. Apart from the centre's caution, or even jumpiness, on entering what will be a new financial phase, there may be a desire to balance more decentralization of resources with more centralization of control. This reflects a preference for control, and reaction to the capture of several Councils by the opposition, but also some other implied beliefs, which might often be questioned:- first, in the centre's capacity for ever more supervision, of a large number of local agencies; second, that more central control will not have significant negative effects on local mobilization and activity; and third, that Councils are unsuitable as a major vehicle not only for direct employment and production programmes but even for their promotion. Whether and how these views will evolve remains to be seen.

5. CONCLUSION

"..in comparison...with other and larger African states that have not been able to use state structures to [effectively] plan and implement socio-economic change... the Botswana model suggests that at least a modest form of [public sector] development management is feasible" (Picard, 1987:271).

Rather than give a summary repetition of previous sections, it will be more interesting to conclude with a review of themes. As we mentioned in the introduction, disappointments with technique-oriented central and regional planning led in the 1970s to more appreciation of the administrative, as opposed to mathematical, complexities of development programmes. The State is not integral; it has many parts, each with different information and different interests. Paper planning therefore may not take one far, especially in fast-moving environments. One must consider "the organisation of the complex relationships within governments and the need and procedures for linking analyses carried out by different levels of government" (Allan & Hinchliffe, 1982:147).

More specifically, there has been much attention - first - to how to make planning more operational, e.g. linking it to budgeting, and - second - to how to involve agents at various levels, by multi-level planning or "decentralization". In both cases, planning clearly becomes a part of development administration/management, not just a separate technical specialism; and emphasis must go to providing and operating channels for regular interaction of the many agents involved.

These two lines are partly competitive:- increasing the effective reach of national planning, by its integration with budgeting, can run into competition at some points with trying to improve effectiveness through decentralization. Strong central control can reduce lower-level interest; and even the best-designed set of procedures relies to an extent on the cooperation or enthusiasm of participants, for example in providing good information (Gasper, 1986.)

Botswana has interesting experience in both these areas, as well as of their conflicts. At present the balance is more in favour of the national planners, but with a serious degree of decentralization. We saw that central government is marked by exceptional integration, while local government consists of no fewer than four active bodies. The central planning ministry exercises much of its integrative power through a carefully designed budgetary and planning mechanism. The mechanism is at the same time notably adaptive, and so minimizes the impact on others in terms of restriction or frustration. Segodi agrees that the very "flexibility in the planning and budgeting system allays most of the loud criticism of the system" and of its continuing strong central control (1988:7). The system is perhaps

at its least flexible in dealing with rural local government programmes; but here its emphases on intensive informal coordination and multiple channels of communication come in, and help in handling incipient conflicts.

Close examination of a particular case highlighted the complexity of "decentralization" and the difficulty in making generalizations. We could see that "decentralization" is multi-dimensional; so any measure of it should be a vector, not a scalar. In Botswana there is not just "deconcentration" as well as "devolution"; there is a four-part local administration, and differences according to sector (e.g. agriculture versus health) and aspect (e.g. provision of personnel or of finance). Decentralization is also not a zero-sum game: effective capacity can increase at both central and lower levels.

The quadripartite local administration is of some interest. It arguably allows a spreading of risks, as well as some mutual support, supervision and disciplining (LGSC, 1979; Reilly, 1983; Egner, 1987; Tordoff, 1988). It may also dilute centre-local conflict. Streamlining has been practised instead where it is really important - in the number of Ministries and departments, so avoiding the extremes seen in Zimbabwe.

While avoiding proliferation of organizations, Botswana has invested heavily in planners, and put them to work on more than preparing paper plans. The weight of the investment here has to be seen in comparison to other countries, rather than in financial terms. These steps appear to have paid dividends. Clearly though the country's ability to provide attractive job rewards in government (relative to other sectors) has been critical.

There are great pitfalls in advancing such points as "lessons"; but Botswana's richly recorded experience offers a variety of suggestions, which do merit careful consideration.

Mawhood concluded a recent review of international experiences by advancing two propositions (1987:21-2). Put simply, successful decentralization occurs when political conditions are good, so that governments do not feel threatened, and economic conditions are bad, so that they are seeking to harness local resources and initiatives. This may fit the situation in Botswana after independence. Then in the late 60s and early 70s political opposition grew slightly, economic conditions improved, and centralization probably increased. In the late 70s and early 80s the opposition stagnated, and government agreed to strengthen Councils. However, the economic strains or fears in the 1980s have probably led to new centralization. This does not fit Mawhood's model so well. On the other hand political opposition has revived a little; and at present the government does not feel sufficiently pressed, interested or hopeful for it to lay much stress on local mobilization.

So far, the system has been still too small, homogeneous and economically fortunate for there to be great pressure for further decentralization. There are some arguments that decentralization could help employment generation, but central government seems mistrustful of that option, and especially of devolution. As Botswana is probably one of the countries in the region with more favourable political and economic conditions for decentralization, and for policy experimentation, it will be interesting to follow what happens next.

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NOTES

1. Introduction

[1] GDP in current prices rose from P37m. in 1966 to P997m. in 1982/83; or, in 1979/80 prices, from P129m. to P969m. (Botswana, 1985:14). The growth rate over two decades is the fastest in the world, including on a per capita basis (Lewis & Sharpley, 1988:1). The Botswana pula is approximately equal in value to the Zimbabwe dollar. In the 1970s it was typically worth around US\$1.20; in 1982-83 around US\$0.95; falling later with the rand, to around US\$0.50-0.55, as it is in late 1988.

[2] My discussion of drought relief is indebted to Holm & Morgan (1985).

[3] Egner (1986) argues that some Councils could even have spent more, but that officials at the centre got jittery. However, some other Councils were in difficulty, and it is hard for the centre to know which are which.

[4] See Egner for figures and assumptions (e.g. exclusion of teachers, soldiers and fully aid-funded staff, inclusion of police; 1987:115).

[5] Deconcentration is the allocation of some responsibilities to lower levels within national Ministries. Devolution is the allocation of authority and powers to local government agencies that are locally selected. We cannot expect to capture the full range of situations with just these two labels.

2.1 The setting and the leadership

[1] There are some sub-districts, with their own District Officers.

[2] Isaksen presents the two key concerns here as being (i) retaining demonstrable political independence while not provoking South African destabilization, and (ii) "to refrain from promoting interests which are seen as directly in competition with those of the cattle industry" (1981:33). The official Rural Income Distribution Survey (1974/5) suggested that Botswana had one of the most unequal rural distributions in Africa; and that around 45% of rural households had no cattle. The 1979/82 National Migration Survey also indicated rapidly increasing inequality amongst those who do own cattle: 7% of cattle owners had almost half the total herd, which was then three million. Colclough & McCarthy (1980), amongst others, argue that the cattle industry is highly supported and grossly undertaxed. However, with economic diversification, politics may be evolving beyond Isaksen's comment.

[3] In the early 1970s rural areas received less than 10% of government investment (Colclough & McCarthy, 1980:Ch.4).

[4] All quotations on ARDP in this paper are taken from Chambers (1977).

[5] "Experience since Independence with the difficulties of implementing small construction and other rural improvement projects indicates that dramatic progress cannot be expected" (Botswana, 1973:41).

[6] There have of course been other vote catchers, such as abolition of primary school fees, or the 1980s' secondary school building programme.

[7] Picard argues that this was more than luck: chiefs were well aware what mineral discoveries might bring, and acted accordingly (1987:116).

[8] The high levels of aid reflected several factors: Botswana's original backwardness; its economic smallness but range of opportunities; and the attractiveness to many donors of its multi-racial and mixed-economy philosophy, politically exposed situation, and relatively fast-moving and reliable bureaucracy.

2.2. Central Ministries

[1] For an analysis of the weakness of an isolated Planning Agency, see Hirschmann (1981) on Lesotho. MFDP's dominance in Botswana is partly hereditary. Before the early 1970s, spending Ministries had little room or capacity to argue. They lacked their own Planning Units, and all projects and even part of the recurrent budget were externally funded, with a low ceiling set in Whitehall not Botswana. Their own seconded Units appeared from the early to mid 70s (contra Tordoff, 1988; though they were only counted on the MFDP establishment from 1982). MFDP predominance has largely continued; but Ministry Units when working well can often persuade MFDP.

[2] The cadre is mainly limited to economists but exceptions are fairly common, especially in sector ministries. In the early 1980s it included around 20 professionals in MFDP and 25 in sector ministries; these numbers have now increased. There is a separate cadre of agricultural economists. See e.g. Whiteside (1984) on the work of Planning Officers.

[3] See e.g. District papers to the 1986 NDDC. Dintwa (1986:6) reproduces, with reference to Botswana, this comment by Sharma on development administration in general: "field staff and extension officers...in actual operation, in many cases fall short of being efficient channels of two way communication....Communication is often confined to the issuing of orders or instructions from headquarters to the field and submission of regular reports on routine matters in the opposite direction" (Sharma, 1986:19).

[4] I.e. revenues from the Southern African Customs Union, aid, and from the beef parastatal and the diamonds joint venture. DTRP has offices in Gaborone and Francistown. Recently three district centres (Maun, Kanye and Serowe) each received a DTRP officer.

2.4. District Councils

[1] Quotations in this para. and the next are as given by Chambers (1977).

[2] Including Egner (1978), Local Govt. Structure Commission (1979), Picard & Endresen (1981), amongst others.

3.1. Flexible plans with legal authority

[1] Besides the 40-50 economist Planning Officers and up to 10 agricultural economist planners (see section 2.2.), there have been the following cadres: one DO(D), one DO(L), and one (now two) CPO(s) per district (and sub-district; i.e. including Central's four sub-districts); plus a CFDA coordinator and a Rural Industrial Officer per district; plus 10-15 town and regional planners, now increasing fast beyond that.

[2] The first four national plans were five-year plans, which were all rolled over into a new plan after three years. The fifth and sixth plans (1979-85 and 1985-91) have moved to a new pattern, of six-year plans which are subject to a detailed analytical review in their fourth year. This Midterm Review, as done in 1983, then provides the starting point for preparation of the next plan, during the last two years of its predecessor.

[3] For example, the intentional "overplanning" factor in NDP V was 30%. Taking this into account, the total level of spending in 1979-82 was almost exactly the expected level (Botswana, 1983:58-9).

[4] Slightly different procedures are required with foreign-funded and domestically funded projects.

[5] In the NDP V period development expenditure was 111.5% of the initially projected level (Botswana, 1985).

[6] The 1983 Midterm Review reported that estimates of the recurrent costs arising were still inadequate. Implicitly, the spending ministries may tend to play down such costs; they know that once a project has been initiated it is highly unlikely to be terminated because recurrent costs are higher than originally indicated. Hence the Finance Ministry's insistence now on a surprisingly low ceiling for the growth of the development budget (2% p.a. in NDP VI). Some bigspending ministries have a second tactic; rather than try to recruit professional personnel, they largely rely on inducting their own trainees, whom government then finds it virtually impossible not to provide with permanent posts. (Botswana, 1983:66, 116, 122-3).

3.2. District development planning

[1] Including amongst other members, officers from Agriculture and Commerce & Industry (especially their Rural Industrial Officer for the district). The committee administers small grants to new enterprises.

[2] Including officers from Agriculture, Health, adult education, community development, and family and social welfare. A new post of District Officer (Extension) was to be created in each district during NDP VI; the idea was apparently dropped in favour of simply strengthening existing mechanisms.

[3] This committee aims to prepare and monitor land use plans, to guide and coordinate work by Agriculture, Wildlife, DTRP and others; and advises the Land Board. The District Officer (Lands) is executive secretary. DO(L)s have mostly had agriculture, geography, or environment backgrounds. Typically they have also functioned as handyman physical planners, and been involved with much project management; though these roles may have declined as other officers have appeared at district level.

[4] Vol. III of the 1973-8 National Plan consisted of 1500pp. of these area-and-project-description District Plans (Picard, 1987:239).

[5] See Reilly (1981) for more details on preparation of District Plans.

3.3. Operating style and facilitating conditions

[1] There have been instances of Permanent Secretaries curbing the attendance of Planning Units at NDDC; but that was not general. The 1986 NDDC for example included an open question-and-answer session with the head of the civil service. Central officers may not like District correspondence per se, & may or may not like visits from Districts, but can see these as the acceptable price for hospitality during desirable visits to Districts. However the PS of Local Government cancelled the 1988 NDDC, supposedly because the conferences had elicited too little follow-up from Ministries.

[2] Another possible factor is that in most areas of allocation, there is not an intrusive Party. Herbst (1987) has noted a contrast between the "political" style of land allocation in Zimbabwe and the "technocratic" administrative style of allocating rural health facilities. It seems to apply to Botswana too, for land as against most other planning areas.

[3] DTRP also attend. Many Planning Officers have had shared backgrounds - from studying together at the small University of Botswana or, in the past, coming via the U.K. Overseas Development Institute fellowship scheme.

[4] North East District note that "there is confusion because some of the extension workers give the [Village Extension Team, VEXT] a low priority.... It only depends on personalities...but where there is cooperation [the team.. works very well." The same applies for the District Extension Team. Political conflicts can arise in VDCs, in one of the districts with a strong political opposition (1986:2-3); and committees often fail to have a quorum. Seitshiro (1986) analyses VEXTs' problems in terms of pressures on village-based

staff: from the centre, poor work conditions, remoteness, large areas to cover, and pressure to concentrate on visible infrastructural projects.

4.1. Emerging problems

[1] Agriculture was around 5% of GDP in 1985-6 (admittedly these were drought years), down from 35-40% around independence (also a drought). It has declined in absolute terms since the mid-70s. Conventional agricultural research may not be of much use for the type of man-land systems in Botswana. Manufacturing was 8% of GDP in 1985, and has grown since independence at over 10% p.a. (from a very small base; Lewis & Sharpley, 1988).

[2] Isaksen argued that expatriates interested in later employment with international agencies would plump for financial caution. But the record of commercial bank lending to LDCs suggests that people who will not remain in post to face the results of their financial commitments can instead prefer the kudos from large disbursement.

[3] NDP VI referred to 3200 jobs created with grants of P14m., up to Dec. 1984, i.e. at about P4,400 per job (Botswana, 1985:239). It later clarifies that this refers to medium-scale projects (p.240); and further, many of the projects would have started even without the FAP.

4.3. De- and re-centralization in the 1980s

[1] Coverage in this section is mainly to the start of 1987. It draws particularly on Egner (1986, 1987) for material while not necessarily accepting his interpretations. The version drawn in Sterkenburg (1987) makes exaggerated contrasts with the preceding period, based on a misunderstanding of the role of district plans, which have always been advisory.

[2] From 51% in 1976-9 to 55% in 1979-85. See Egner (1986) for basis of calculations. Note that 100% here refers to the TECs in force near the end of the period, when the figures for many projects have been raised above the original target, and when some other projects have been superseded and hence not acted on; also the TECs incorporate some intentional "overplanning". So the percentages give an overly poor impression.

[3] Egner states that none of the senior ULGS administrators in 1986 had ever done so (1987:62).

[4] Even Leach (1981), in reviewing his 6 years as Rural Development Adviser in MFDP, has almost nothing to say on local authorities.

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